

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 OMB-01 AID-20 DRC-01 /151 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1595

INFO CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 8432

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KS

SUBJ: ROKG EXPLAINS NEW POLICY OF "SELF-CONTROL"

SUMMARY: DURING PAST WEEK ROKG OFFICIALS, LED BY PRIME MINISTER KIM CHONG-PIL, HAVE HAD FREQUENT MEETINGS WITH UNIVERSITY, PRESS, CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT PARTY LEADERS. EMPHASIS HAS BEEN ON EXPLAINING NEW GOVERNMENT POLICY OF MODERATION; I.E., PROMISING NON-INTERFERENCE IN CHURCH, SCHOOL AND PRESS. AT SAME TIME GOVERNMENT HAS MADE CLEAR THAT VARIOUS GROUPS IN SOCIETY MUST PRACTICE "SELF-CONTROL," AND THAT CRITICISM OF BASIC YUSHIN SYSTEM WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. END SUMMARY.

1. THE PRIME MINISTER MET DEC 13 WITH 80 UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS AND COLLEGE DEANS IN MOST IMPORTANT OF SERIES ROKG CONTACTS WITH KOREAN LEADERS. THE PRIME MINISTER REPORTEDLY PLEDGED TO END GOVERNMENT SURVEILLANCE ON CAMPUS AND PROMISED UNIVERSITIES INTERNAL SELF-RULE UNDER SUPERVISION OF PROFESSORS. ON OTHER HAND HE WARNED STUDENTS AGAINST CRITICIZING THE POLITICAL SYSTEM, STATING THAT IT WOULD CREATE A GRAVE SITUATION IF CAMPUS UNREST DEVELOPED IN OPPOSITION THE THE "PRESENT INSTITUTIONAL ORDER." HE CAUTIONED THAT PRESIDENT PARK'S LENIENCY SHOULD NOT BE MISTAKEN FOR WEAKNESS. COMMENTS OF UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS AS REPORTED WERE, IN GENERAL, SYMPATHETIC TO STUDENT POSITION AND EMPHASIZED CON-

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STRUCTIVE STEPS THE GOVERNMENT COULD TAKE TO REDUCE CHANCE OF

CAMPUS CONFLICT.

2. PRESS ALSO REPORTS DEC 13 MEETING OF PRESIDENT PARK WITH DRP AND YUJONG-HOE LEADERS. PRESIDENT URGED EFFORTS TO CONVINCE DOUBTERS OF YUSHIN TO ACCEPT REFORMS AND WORK TOGETHER. IN DEC 12 MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER, GOVERNMENT PARTY LEADERS PROMISED TO GUIDE THE STUDENTS AND IMPROVE TREATMENT OF PROFESSORS AND JOURNALISTS.

3. IN EFFORT TOWARD CHURCHES, PRIME MINISTER GAVE DINNER DEC 10 FOR CHRISTIAN LEADERS. PRIME MINISTER QUOTED AS GUARANTEEING FREEDOM OF CHURCH AND CAMPUS, WHILE WARNING THAT THIS FREEDOM SHOULD NOT GO SO FAR AS TO CAUSE DISRUPTION.

4. GOVERNMENT-MEDIA CONTACT HAS BEEN EXTENSIVE. MINISTER CULTURE AND INFORMATION YUN CHU-YONG MET WITH SEOUL EDITORS DEC 7, AND PRIME MINISTER HAD DINNER FOR MEDIA LEADERS SAME DAY. PRIME MINISTER AND YUN HELD LUNCHEON DEC 11 FOR MANAGING EDITORS, REPORTEDLY PROMISING GOVERNMENT WILL INSURE A "SELF-CONTROLLED PRESS."

5. COMMENT: MAJOR THEME OF THESE MEETINGS IS THAT UNDER NEW POLICY OF "SELF-CONTROL" UNIVERSITY, CHURCH, AND MEDIA LEADERS ARE EXPECTED TO PREVENT CRITICISM FROM EXTENDING TO YUSHIN CONSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBASSIES, PRESS AND UNIVERSITY SOURCES HAVE EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT INTERNAL CONTROL WILL PREVENT INCREASING CRITICISM OF PRESIDENT AND GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE.

6. FOR ITS PART, GOVT IS MAKING CLEAR THAT DIRECT CRITICISM OF PRESIDENT OR CHALLENGE TO PRESENT POLITICAL SYSTEM ARE OUT OF BOUNDS AND CRITICS OF GOVERNMENT MUST ACCEPT THIS. GOVT FIGURES ARE WARNING PRIVATELY THAT SUCH UNRESTRAINED CRITICISM CAN EVENTUALLY LEAD TO A SERIOUS REACTION BY PRESIDENT AND THE GOVERNMENT. UNDERHILL

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